



City of Milwaukee

Meeting Minutes

SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

ALDERMAN JOE DAVIS, SR., CHAIR
Daisy Cubias, Al Durtka, Charles Vang and Vivian Chen

Staff Assistant, Terry MacDonald, (414)-286-2233
Fax: (414) 286-3456, E-mail: tmacdo@milwaukee.gov
File Specialist, Charlotte Rodriguez, 286-8797, E-mail: crodri@milwaukee.gov

Thursday, May 25, 2006

10:00 AM

Room 301-G, City Hall

1. Meeting Convened: 10:07A.M.

Roll call

Present Cubias, Davis, Durtka, Vang

Excused Chen

Also present: Ronald Leonhardt, City Clerk

2. Approval of the minutes of the March 23, 2006 meeting

Ms. Cubias moved approval of the minutes, seconded by Mr. Durtka. There were no objections.

3. Recommendations given by the City of Milwaukee, City Clerk Ronald Leonhardt relative to the structure of the Sister Cities Committee

Mr. Leonhardt appeared and advised that at the last meeting he was asked to prepare some recommendations for a procedure that this committee could use to set up its structure. He submitted a memorandum with an attached draft copy of a proposed Chapter to the Code of Ordinances (Exhibit 1) for the committee to use as an outline or starting point. He noted that he formatted it as a chapter, but found after some review and also due to the nature of some of the provisions, he feels it should be a city ordinance not a chapter. Mr. Leonhardt referred to the outline and explained that he included, as the first section, a list of the current policies that have been established by past councils. He noted that this committee already has had some discussion at its first meeting on possible changes to the current policies, specifically to items #7 and #8. Mr. Leonhardt then gave a summary of each of the following sections that he recommends to be included as part of the code of ordinances: A procedural section, which would set up a process for the submission of applications; A City Clerk and Common Council Action section, which would include a 5-year renewal term and it would require that sponsoring entities submit an annual report to this committee and finally a section that would indicate that the Common Council will always has the ability to terminate a sister city relationship. Ald. Davis asked if a request is submitted for a sister cities relationship, how would it be processed. Mr. Leonhardt replied that under this process the request would come before this committee first and then if this committee approves the request, this committee would request that a resolution be introduced and it would be referred to and heard by the Community & Economic Development committee. Ald. Davis asked if a general resolution could be introduced so that when every this Sister Cities committee makes a recommendation, there would already be a file open to put it in. Mr. Leonhardt advised that they could do it that way or just introduce a file each time this committee needs one.

Mr. Durtka asked what would be the intended procedure that they would follow for a request for a friendly relationship, such as for Ningbo, China and Ald. Zielinski's file for Patiala, India. Mr. Leonhardt replied that it might be good ideal to indicate in the ordinance that any attempted to establish any kind of relationship leading to a sister cities relationship, including friendly relationships would need to come before this committee before a file is introduced. Mr. Leonhardt noted that a friendly relationship has been a new way in which to establish relations with a city. Ms. Cubias noted that they do need to look at sister cities relationships that other U.S. cities already have when a request come in, so that this committee can determine if they will need a waiver. Mr. Durtka reiterated what he explained at the first meeting, regarding the requirement of cities to get a waiver from any other US city who already has a sister cities relationship with a city that say Milwaukee is considering having a relationship with. Mr. Leonhardt asked Ms. MacDonald if a referral has been received for the files that have already been introduced. Ms. MacDonald replied that she hasn't received one yet, but the Staff Assistant of the Community and Economic Development Committee had advised her that one is being sent.

Ald. Davis asked if any of the members had additional suggestions for the policy, procedures and/or the structure. Mr. Durtka referred to the section 335-11 of Mr. Leonhardt draft ordinance, that requires the sponsoring entity to submit an annual report and recommends that if no annual report is submit for two years they can move to terminate the relationship earlier then the five year renewal term noted in Section 330-13, which he feels is a bit too long. Mr. Leonhardt replied that the Section 330-13 doesn't require this committee to wait 5 years to terminate a relationship.

Mr. Durtka further recommended that in the future they might want to consider adding more members to this committee. He suggested that they may want to consider adding as members those individual or groups who are sponsoring a Sister City relationship or have one representative who will represent all the groups as a member of this committee. Ald. Davis added that they could also consider establishing an ad hoc committee who would report to this Sister Cities Committee. Ms. Cubias advised that they don't have enough members when working to get a quorum. She feels that 7 members would be a good number. Ald. Davis advised that once they have the policy and procedures in place they may want to move to increase the members to this committee.

Ms. Cubias recommended that they discuss items #7 and #8 of Section 335-3 of Mr. Leonhardt's draft ordinance, which refers to expenditures associated with sister cities relationship expenses, including travel expenses. Mr. Durtka explained that some cities have full-time programs establish, that include full-time employees and funds already established for those programs. He advised that they may want to have funds set aside for sister city Relationships expenditures. Ald. Davis explained the Aldermen travel procedures, which has available travel funds to him as a member of the National League Cities, but there isn't travel funds available for staff to attend a sister cities conference or event. Mr. Leonhardt explained that travel funds are currently established in each Departments budget and are approved as part as the regular budget process without further Common Council approval, but because of this provision those funds cannot be used for sister cities relationship travels, and even if item #8 were eliminated, the request for sister cities travel funds would still need Common Council approval. Ald. Davis asked when was item #8 added as a policy. Mr. Leonhardt replied that they would get that information for the committee members.

Ald. Davis asked Mr. Leonhardt to expand on Item #7. Mr. Leonhardt explained that there are several different ways that they could handle item #7, such as the Mayor's Office

could included in their budget monies that would only be intended for use for sister cities purpose, such as for gifts, receptions, etc., or they could create a special purpose account where funds would be specifically designated for sister cities purposes and over site of that account would be assign to a certain department. Mr. Leonhardt noted that establishing a fund in the budget or a special purpose account would be a good idea. Ms. Cubias advised that there isn't any extra money in the budget for next year. Mr. Leonhardt replied that maybe it can be discussed in the fall after the budget is complete. Mr. Durtka asked if the membership dues for the membership to the Sister Cities International are being cover under that special account. Mr. Leonhardt advised that no it wouldn't, membership dues are already under a different special membership account, established under the City Clerks Office that specifically pays for membership fees.

Ald. Davis advised that if any of the members have any recommendations, they should submit them to Ms. MacDonald who will distribute them to the other members and those recommendations will be taken up at the next meeting.

Mr. Vang moved to hold item #8 until the next meeting, second by Mr. Durtka. There were no objections.

4. Discussion and recommendations on the current policy for Sister Cities relationships

Ms. Cubias handed out a report (Exhibit 2) of the records the Mayor's Office has for each of the current Sister Cities relationships. She referred to her list and explained her attempts to contact them. She advised that they have had no contacted with the following and suggested that the sister cities relationships with them be terminated: Ticuantepe, Nicaragua; Mulhouse, France; Omsk, Siberia; Parma, Italy.

Mr. Durtka advised that Mulhouse, France fell apart during Mayor Norquist's term, due to lack of communication and the contact person has since retired, but lives in Milwaukee part time and that they could contact him and find out if there is a possibility of re-connection. Ald. Davis advised that they could move to terminate the relationship with Mulhouse, France at this time and if they decide to re-establish they could do that, seconded by Mr. Durtka. There were no objections.

Mr. Durtka moved to hold Schwerin, Germany to the next meeting so that he could attempt to contact them and have them appear before this committee, seconded by Mr. Vang. There were no objections.

Mr. Durtka moved to terminate Parma, Italy, seconded by Ms. Cubias. Ald. Davis requested that a letter be sent to Festa Italiana advising them that the sister cities relationships will be terminate. There were no objections.

Ald. Davis moved that they hold Galway, Ireland. Mr. Leonhardt advised that he would talk to Ald. Murphy to find out if there is a contact person for Galway, Ireland. There were no objections.

Ald. Davis moved to hold Queenstown, South Africa. There were no objections.

Mr. Leonhardt asked if they are considering introducing a resolution to re-establish the current sister cities relationships. Ald. Davis advised that they might want to terminate all the current relationships and then establish those who have an interested and have submitted current documentation as new relationships with a 5-year term.

Ald. Davis asked the members if they want to request a file right now to terminate a few at a time or do they want to do it as a packet. Mr. Durtka advised that they should do it

as a packet, so that they can send letters advising that the relationships will be terminate if there is no contact. Ms. Cubias concurred with Mr. Durtka. Ald. Davis advised that they have already requested that contact be made at the March 2006 Sister Cities Committee and attempts have already been made. Ald. Davis advised that they moved forward and terminate those relationships that they have already decided on earlier in the meeting.

5. Reports given by representatives from the current Sister Cities relationships

None appeared.

6. Report given by Raul Galvan on the Milwaukee sister city relationship with Nuevitas, Cuba

Mr. Galvan appeared and addressed the Committee. He handed out a schedule of the activities that has taken place over the past two years (Exhibit 3) between Milwaukee and Nuevitas, Cuba that he had prepared on behalf of the Milwaukee Nuevitas (Cuba) Association. Mr. Galvan gave a brief back round of Nuevitas, Cuba. He than handed out a report date Feb. 18, 2003 by Milwaukee Nuevitas Association (Exhibit 4) that they had submitted to the US Department of the Treasury. Mr. Galvan elaborated on the Association's involvement over the past two years. He noted that he would like to make a recommendation to this committee, that they explore what it is that they want to accomplish with this committee, such as economic issues or culture relationships. Mr. Galvan explained some of the problems that the relationship has come across, such as the problem with traveling to Cuba. He noted that most of their contact is either by phone or e-mail.

Ald. Davis asked how was the relationship formed. Mr. Galvan advised that the Sister Cities International advised them that they weren't in favor of a sister cities relationships with Cuba. Ald. Davis further asked were they ever a member of Sister Cities International. Mr. Galvan replied no they never have been. Mr. Durtka asked if there is a group or membership. Mr. Galvan replied that they don't have a formal organization and they're main purpose was to get medicine to Cuba. Mr. Galvan further commented that if they are willing to guide them in a direction, they are willing to work on it. Mr. Durtka advised that they should have some kind of group or formal organization so that if Mr. Galvan were to move out of stated, etc. they can keep the relationship going. Ald. Davis advised that they would need to have an organization that can support and protect the interest of a relationship.

Ald. Davis asked if they could get an updated letter from Cuba stating their interest in having a sister cities relationship with the City of Milwaukee. Ms. Cubias moved to make the two reports submitted by Mr. Galvan a part of the record. There were no objections. Ald. Davis further moved that they hold Nuevitas, Cuba until they get the requested information. There were no objections. Mr. Durtka asked if they could also get a list of the coordinating committees' contact information. Mr. Galvan replied that he would get that information to this committee.

7. Discussion and recommendations on the Sister Cities Committee's work plan

Mr. Davis referred to the Memo from LRB data January 18, 2006 (Exhibit 5) on Sister City Relationship requirements.

Ald. Davis advised that they already have files introduced by Ald. McGee and Ald. Zielinski to establish a friendly relationships with Venezuela and Patiala, India. Mr. Leonhardt advised that there is also another file pending, requesting a Sister Cities Relationship with Ningbo, China, sponsored by Ald. Murphy.

Ald. Davis asked that a list be prepared for use at the up coming meeting of all the sister cities that were held today and potential sister cites requests to be included in the work plan.

Mr. Durtka asked if there was a specific number of cities stated in the current policy that they are allowed to establish in a given year. Mr. Leonhardt referred to item #5 of the 1/18/06 LRB Memo that states that the current ordinance allows 10 max and only 2 per a 2 year period. Mr. Durtka recommended that they re-exam that number and explained that the Mayor's Office, in some way has to maintain and/or oversee that those are solid relationships. Ms. Cubias advised that in the past maybe the limit was set because they didn't have staff. Ald. Davis advised that he will have a discussion with the Mayor to find out if he wants to continue over seeing the Sister Cities relationships and if he isn't he will than talk to the President of the Council to see if he is interested.

Mr. Durtka noted that the other concern he has is with Ald. Zielinski file on a friendly relationship with Patiala, India, specifically if they know if there is a group already established and is willing to work on a sister cities relationship. Ald. Davis explained that is where the criteria requirements will come in place and set in the policy, such as there is a group in place before a resolution is submitted.

Mr. Durtka noted that there may be more than one group within the City, and some of those groups may not be in favor of a sister cities relationship with a certain city and therefore they should have some kind of notice posted informing the public of requests for sister cities relationships. Ms. Cubias concurred with Mr. Durtka's comments. Ald. Davis noted that nothing precludes this committee from holding public meetings. Mr. Leonhardt advised that all of this committee meetings are public meetings and are posted. He further advised that when applications are submitted and scheduled to be heard by this committee the agenda is posted in the City Hall Rotunda and on the City's website and hearing notices can be sent to all the groups the City Clerk's Office is aware of. He further explained the process once this committee approves an application relative to public meetings and notices.

8. Next meeting date and time

Ald. Davis noted that at the next meeting they will have discussion on the current Sister Cities relationships and potential sister Cities relationships.

Ald. Davis advised that Ms. MacDonald will contact each of the members to set up the next meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:41 A.M.

Terry J. MacDonald
Staff Assistant